



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**

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**For immediate release**

**1. Lab results indicate pesticides caused fish kills in Monona County; southwest Iowa**

**LAB RESULTS INDICATE PESTICIDES CAUSED FISH KILLS IN MONONA COUNTY; SOUTHWEST IOWA**

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WHITING — More than 67,000 fish were killed along a 6.8 mile stretch of New Farmer Ditch (formerly known as Garretson Outlet Ditch) in Monona County in a fish kill reported to the DNR on Aug. 31.

The fish included shiners, minnows, carp, bullheads and green sunfish. DNR fisheries biologists say the final estimated loss is likely well under what the actual kill number is because the effort was hampered by heavy vegetation in the water, making it difficult to get an accurate count.

B&W Control Specialists were allegedly spraying an aquatic herbicide on the stream to kill undesirable plants in the water along 10 miles of the stream from the headwaters of New Farmer Ditch to its confluence with the West Branch of the Little Sioux River. The firm had been hired by the New Farmer Ditch Drainage District.

It is believed the fish kill occurred because the spraying killed vegetation in the water, which in turn, removed oxygen needed for fish survival.

The DNR has also lifted a water warning for residents and livestock producers in the vicinity of the stream after water sample results show the water is safe. At the time of the fish kill, the DNR had warned some residents in approximately six homes east of Whiting to not use water from their private wells until testing could be done to ensure none of the herbicide had seeped from the streambanks into groundwater. The warning affected residents within 500 feet as well as livestock being watered along the stream to the confluence with the Little Sioux River.

The DNR is continuing to investigate this incident.

In other August investigations, lab results showed elevated levels of a common insecticide, Chlorpyrifos, shortly after fish kills occurred in an Audubon County farm pond and at Little Lake George in Harlan.

The DNR investigated a fish kill at the farm pond located several miles southeast of Exira, because of a complaint that aerial spraying on Aug. 9 had caused the fish kill. Laboratory results from two water samples collected Aug. 13 showed levels of Chlorpyrifos at two to three times the state's water quality standard of 0.083 parts per billion for aquatic life.

Very high levels of Chlorpyrifos were found when the DNR investigated a fish kill that occurred Aug. 15 at Little Lake George in Harlan.

The DNR will continue to investigate these two incidents. The Pesticide Bureau of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is also investigating the incidents to determine if pesticides were handled properly.

Chlorpyrifos breaks down relatively rapidly in the environment and should not present a risk or a health threat to people who eat fish from the pond or lake.

*Writer: Kevin Baskins*